



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Executive Office of Health & Human Services**  
**Department of Mental Retardation**  
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To the DMR Community:

On December 12, 2008, Secretary Dr. JudyAnn Bigby announced a new initiative to expand community services for individuals served by the Department of Mental Retardation ("DMR" or "the Department") and to restructure the service delivery system for individuals residing in DMR institutional facilities. The "DMR Community Services Expansion and Facilities Restructuring Plan" which is attached is the document that outlines the Plan to move forward with this initiative.

The Plan was developed by senior staff within DMR, and is based upon information that is, through the issuance of this Report, being made publicly available. The information includes data regarding the movement towards deinstitutionalization which has been occurring over the last thirty years; DMR's history and experience in closing institutions and transitioning individuals to less restrictive settings; the numbers of individuals currently residing in DMR facilities; DMR's experience and ability to create community capacity to meet individuals' needs; the relative costs of operating DMR's institutional facilities and its community residences; the fiscal impact of the proposed restructuring; the impact upon employees in the facilities and efforts to address or mitigate impact; and the individualized planning process for individuals transitioning to other facility-based or community-based settings.

There are assumptions contained within the Report about what choices individuals and families may make as we work together to implement the closures; and projections about future costs based upon those choices. The Plan must necessarily be flexible as we enter into planning discussions with families at all our facilities. A basic tenet of the Plan is that individuals and families will participate in making choices about the type of service settings they choose, whether it be institutional or community-based. As families, guardians and individuals express their preferences, those aspects of the Plan may be modified.

Likewise, the fiscal projections were based upon current costs of operation, not future costs, and deliberately excluded certain costs including costs related to increases in collective bargaining and administrative costs which are spread across all sectors of our service system. In most instances, the cost projections are based upon data as of October 31, 2008, and do not include subsequent budget reductions; in all instances the point in time where data was gathered is indicated. We have

attempted to be transparent regarding those items excluded from the analysis and the rationale for their exclusion.

As we move forward, we welcome the participation of families, stakeholders and individuals in implementing the Plan.

We look forward to working with you on this exciting and challenging new initiative.

Sincerely,

Elin M. Howe  
Commissioner